

**Bicycle and Pedestrian Working Group
for
Executive Committee for Highway Safety
Meeting Minutes; Mtg. #5
March 1, 2007**

Location:

NCDOT Large Conference Room, Room 280, 401 Oberlin Road @ 9:00 a.m.

Working Group Members in Attendance:

Timothy Akers	Greg Brew	Jeff Cox	James Dunlop
Frank Hackney	Daniel Keel	Greg Loy	Mary Meletiou
Tyler Meyer	Richard Mullinax	Jimmy Newkirk	Tom Norman
Sarah O'Brien	Pete Schubert	Charlie Zegeer	

Guests in Attendance:

Patricia Driggers Jane Stutts

Working Group Members Absent:

Loretta Barren	Cliff Braam	Vickie Embry	Brad Hibbs
Margaret Landon	Carrie Simpson		

Scribe:

Jeff Cox

New Action Items:

- 1. Mary Meletiou to continue development of the pedestrian portion of the Drivers Education Manual.**
- 2. Invite someone from Law Enforcement to speak to the BPWG on education issues of law enforcement.**
- 3. Invite persons experienced in school siting issues to join the BPWG to broaden the discussion on this important issue.**
- 4. Pedestrian Policy Committee to meet to develop primary elements and identify reasons to change NCDOT's policy**

Ongoing Subcommittees

- DMV Drivers Handbook subcommittee: Mary Meletiou (Chair), Tim Akers, Margaret Landon, Frank Hackney, and Pete Schubert.
- Law Enforcement Education subcommittee: Tim Akers (Chair), Mary Meletiou, Margaret Landon, Frank Hackney, and Pete Schubert.
- Subcommittee to propose strategy to Executive Committee to broaden Pedestrian Policy: Greg Brew (Chair), Vickie Embry, Daniel Keel, Richard Mullinax, Tom Norman, Charlie Zegeer.
- Subcommittee to develop resolution on school site selection: Greg Loy (Chair), Jeff Cox, Mary Meletiou, Pete Schubert, and Sarah Worth.

Minutes:

- The meeting began at approximately 9:00 a.m.

Task I – Welcome

Tom opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

Task II – Introductions

Captain Tim Akers introduced Captain Patricia Driggers of the Jacksonville Police Department. She will be attending our meetings for the next few months.

Jane Stutts, Associate Director for Social and Behavioral Research at UNC's Highway Safety Research Center was also introduced.

Task III – Status of Bike/Ped Working Group Strategies --**1. *DMV Driver's Handbook Revision***

Mary Meletiou reported that she still needs to write the pedestrian portion.

Jane Stutts suggested that the American Motor Vehicle Association could help with the update of manuals.

Pete Schubert mentioned that someone had been involved in a recent incident and had asked for information from a number of police officers about the laws on bicycling. They were appalled at the general lack of knowledge of the police.

One problem is that there is no legal description of a bicycle lane.

Tim said that he had not seen a definition of a bike lane.

Mary confirmed that the definition is not in the definitions section of the manual. She mentioned that the bicycle is defined by law as a vehicle. There are some laws that refer to motor vehicles that do not apply to "vehicles". Clarification is needed to ensure that laws that should apply to each category are referred to correctly.

Tom asked if we should interpret or seek interpretation.

Tim thinks we should clarify who is allowed in a bicycle lane.

Tom feels that though we need to pursue clarity in bike and pedestrian laws, we need to continue to educate on what we do know.

Jim likened this issue to bus lane definitions in other states.

Tyler mentioned that Greensboro has seen confusion in how the public deals with bicycle lanes.

Tim agreed with Tom that we do need to move forward in getting known information out to the public.

2. *Law Enforcement Education*

Mary Meletiou gave a brief update on what is being discovered in regard to having instruction on bicycle and pedestrian laws be part of the mandatory training for law enforcement officers. Having the materials ready for the courses is not enough. She stressed the need for instructors to oversee the online courses. She said she may have someone who could be an instructor.

Pam Pope of the North Carolina Justice Academy has offered to help with the curriculum.

Tim attended the Chiefs' conference and said that the available Handbooks were all distributed.

He also feels that instructors for these courses are plentiful. He, himself, is a certified instructor and that there are many others across the state. He feels that the completion of the lesson plan/curriculum is the major obstacle.

Tim also reports that though the 2008 Mandatory Training is "in place", it may still be "in flux" enough for the curriculum to be added.

Jane suggested the ECHS invite someone from Law Enforcement come to educate all working groups about Law Enforcement Education.

Task IV – Break

There was a short break with refreshments.

Task V – Status of New Action Items from last meeting

1. Resolution supporting County Construction of Transportation Facilities – Tom Norman

Tom reported on the ECHS's response to his presentation of the resolution. The Committee is very interested in the issue but did not feel this is the time to pass the resolution.

Tom mentioned that in response to a bill to expedite school construction, Kevin Lacy and Joel Cranford had presented a similar question to a legislative committee. Jim Dunlop was able to summarize that NCDOT is seen as an obstacle to get past in the race to build schools.

Jim also mentioned that Mecklenburg County is taking the stand that building transportation facilities, including school driveways and parking lots, is the responsibility of NCDOT.

Jim said he would ask Joel to send a copy of the bill to us. Jeff will forward via email to the group.

Daniel said that Operations agrees that now is not the time to pursue this resolution because of the House Bill.

Tyler spoke of how Guilford County may have set a precedent by requiring schools to build sidewalks.

Charlie spoke of the issues surrounding East Chapel Hill High School – That new schools have no mechanism to get sidewalks.

Pete summarized by saying that there appears to be no consistency or state standard for requiring schools to construct transportation facilities.

2. Subcommittee on School Site Selection

Greg Loy mentioned that the question before us is "How to select a school site?" Localities appear to be interested only in dollars that are visible. They appear to be unaware of the issues concerning the hidden expenses of transportation, increased travel distance, etc.

Tom spoke of his attendance of a meeting of a House Select Committee about SR 25. It seems that statewide legislators are aware of issues with local school boards. Staffers are making decisions based on a narrow set of items. There is a need to work toward broadening that set of criteria consistently across the state.

Tyler suggested we ask the question “What kind of information do planning departments provide to school systems?” What kind of training is provided to school system staffs. Perhaps a school siting committee could be put in place to work with schools. School systems seem to generally consider that walking and biking to school is not a major issue.

Jim mentioned the trend that new schools are predominantly one-story schools. This may have resulted from ADA safety issues in stairwells, etc.

Tyler mentioned the need to look at the issue of land acreage requirements and also to design for interconnectivity with neighborhoods.

Jim also mentioned that one obstacle to interconnectivity is the perception that schools must become fortresses to secure students from the threat of tragic events.

Tom asked Tyler what he knew about the new Northern Guilford school, touted as a “green” school. Did they consider the promotion of walking, etc.?

Tyler said that he would look into that and report back to us.

There was discussion on cultural habits and how they play into the congestion issues around schools.

Jim suggested the Working Group invite a school site specialist to come in to present. Perhaps to the ECHS.

Jimmy will look into some possibilities at the Department of Public Instruction for someone who could speak on the subject.

3. *Subcommittee on Broadening NCDOT’s Pedestrian Policy*

Greg Brew reminded us of the design criteria research he had given us at the last meeting. Cliff is still receiving comments from the group on the subject.

Tyler suggested a focus on the cons of the policy, including issues like the local match requirement.

Mary asked what is the definition of policy? Is it design guidelines, financing, or where to build. She suggested it start with more global concepts. We should first look at the 1999 change in Federal mandate and address issues in our currently policy that do not meet the new mandate.

Jim asked how do we build sidewalks in a shoulder section. Do paved shoulders qualify as a pedestrian facility?

Tom feels that the issues of the current policy involve mainstreaming. A Pedestrian Policy Task Force should be created to develop primary elements and identify reasons to change the policy. Greg Brew will call a meeting to do this.

4. *Update on development of Strategy to increase penalties in school zones for not stopping in at crosswalks and for speeding through school zones.*

To illustrate the current relevance of the issue of school zone safety in the state, Mary Meletiou presented an article from the Fayetteville Observer about the problem of speeding in a Fayetteville school zone.

Tim said that enforcement issues can only follow what is on the ground (in terms of facility design). He said that he would do some research city fines in school zones and bring findings back to the group.

Greg said that compliance to school zone speed limits is usually temporary during times of enforcement campaigns.

A resolution is under development by Cliff that will address the issues of school crossing guard's authority.

Task VI – Implementation Guide Strategy

Jane Stutts proposed a strategy to develop an implementation guide for a community senior pedestrian safety program like the program called Walk Wise, Drive Smart in Hendersonville.

Frank stressed that the issues with aging pedestrians may be as important as those with schools.

After some discussion, the Working Group decided to continue consideration of the proposed strategy and revisit the issue at the next meeting.

Task VII – Next Meeting Date

Our next meeting will be in the Large Conference Room at 401 Oberlin Road at 9:00 on Thursday, May 10th.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:59 AM.